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CLIVE BARKER'S HELLRAISER™



Neil Gaiman.
Dave McKean

Del Stone Jr.
Mark Hempel

McNally Sagal
Shawn Martinbrough

TRISTAN



Wordsworth
Neil Gaiman
writer
Dave McKean
artist

Girl in the Peephole
Del Stone Jr.
writer
Mark Hempel
artist
Mark Wheatley
colorist

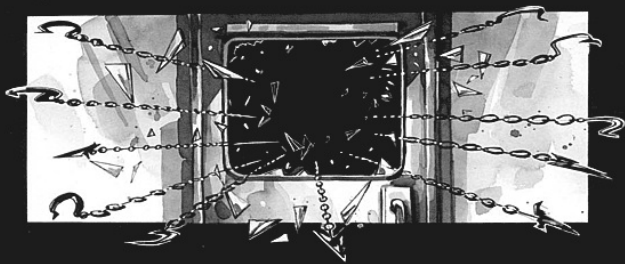
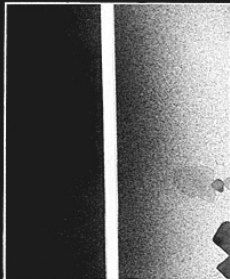
The Last Laugh
McNally Sagal
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letterer

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WORDS

Wordsworth

OF THE

by neil GAIMAN
and dave McKEAN

"Words are but pictures, true or false designed,
To draw the lines and features of the mind."

BUTLER - Upon the Abuse of Human Learning.

Examine please the writhing tapestries of choice
violence implicit in every scratching and syllable.
Smell the beset-blood trickling into each wound,
spelling out new ways to violate sweet innocence.

Hooks rend. New blasphemies configure upon the
inside of my eyelids: tales worked in blood and bone
and flesh and semen, traced in spittle; a dash of bile
here, a slice of kidney there.

Gather round damned children, and together we shall
lament and celebrate the configuration that made us
what we are, today and forever.

So: do you writhe and shiver in the pangs of darling
agonies undreamable, wriggling and gasping and giggling,
anticipating the tumescent thrill of another's damnation?

Good.

Then I'll begin...

His name is Wordsworth.



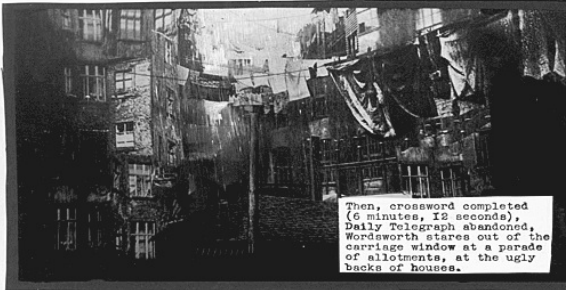
The final clue, 12 down:

12: You imply no
blazing fronds
grow in the abyss?

Inferno.



He writes it down
and sighs dustily.



Then, crossword completed
(6 minutes, 12 seconds),
Daily Telegraph abandoned,
Wordsworth stares out of the
carriage window at a parade
of allotments, at the ugly
backs of houses.

Unsatisfying.



The train shudders into
the city centre and a fly
makes languorous love
to the grimy window.

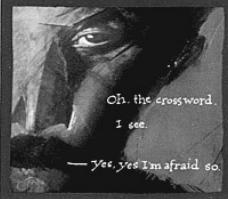
Half an hour to go
before he arrives
at the library.



Half an hour to kill.



You finish puzzle. —
— Sorry?



Oh, the crossword.
I see.

— Yes, yes I'm afraid so.



Words —



Er. Yes.





Wordsworth gazes at the paper in dismay. No true crossword here. He scans the first clue, expects nothing of substance.



Wordsworth ponders. An anagram, perhaps? He combines permutations of 'you', and 'U', with both 'Rabbit' and 'hare', and, as an afterthought, 'lapin'.

1: What you did
to the rabbit. (7)
2: Miss Watson!

It isn't coming.



But deep inside his dry soul something flutters. He knows he knows the answer...



He just doesn't know what it is.

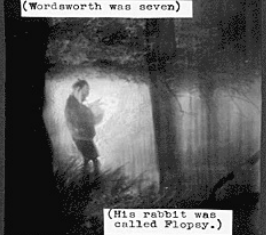
And then...



(Wordsworth was seven)



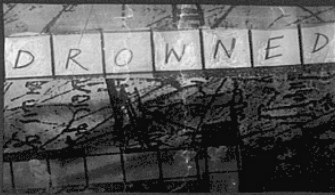
(His rabbit was called Flopsy.)



...he knew.



DROWNED



Wordsworth worked in the museum library, in the stacks of books, organising and classifying.

True friends, unlike his workmates - creatures so incomprehensible to him as to be almost alien: Miss Watson; Miss Priddow; Mrs Kelly...

The second clue was this:

There were over 200,000 books and manuscripts in the museum. They were friends, albeit friends composed of words and stories.

2. Miss Watson's cry of book-borne pain (6, 7, 4).



Jesus looking up! Overton!



I beg your pardon, Miss Watson. I'm afraid my elbow knocked The Abingdon Guide off the table. I'm sorry.

Are you all right?



Of course I'm not all right. You should see my face! I have my shoulders broken!

J
E
S
U
S
O
D
D
I
N
G
N
E
P
T



Wordsworth doesn't know where the puzzle comes from, nor does he care. The puzzle is all. The words are everything.

3. The gift of the Scavenger's Daughter? (5).

He finds out, and fills the answer on the puzzle in his precise, neat handwriting.

Blood.

Answers.

Wordsworth discovers there is a specialised vocabulary in the more uncompromising realms of bondage and flagellation.

From that province he takes
away a scarred back and expertly
pierced genitalia; and, more
importantly, he fills another
nine squares on the puzzle.

Wordsworth attends a meal,
at which noble and affluent
coprophiliacs dine for twelve
courses on forty kinds of
human shit.

He's there for the last word
on the menu: it turns out to
be coffee. Someone has a sense
of humour...

The delights of reluctant
perversion chill him, although
each new experience has a
specific end in view.

Words.

For a word he cuts a dog apart
and casts its entrails upon his
kitchen floor, seeking sense in
the loops and whorls of its
intestines.

For a word he
violates a small
child.

9: The taste of
Janet Priddow's
flesh (4).

He could guess.
But he had to know.

P O R K

All his life he had loved
words; now he found his love
to be a demanding, meticulous
mistress.

90 DIE IN
MUSEUM
FIRE

His job was abandoned,
following the fire that
destroyed the museum and
almost claimed his life.

and grey (6)

50: The doorway (4)

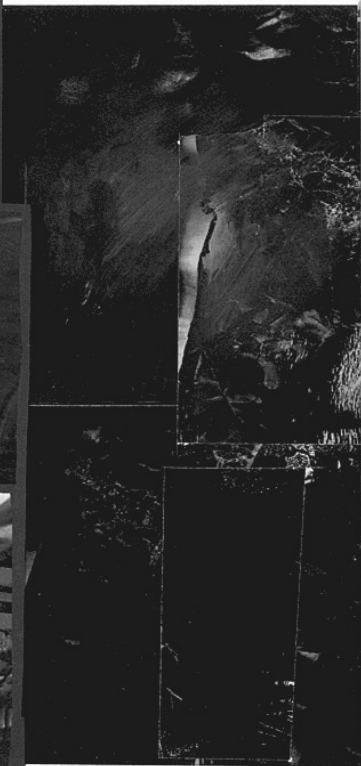
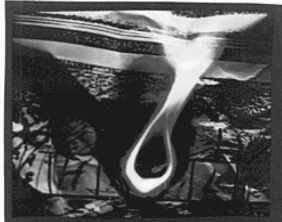
He no longer ate. His
actions were solely
defined by the puzzle...

And, in the end, there
were only four spaces
to fill in. One word.

One clue.

And the thing that had
once been Harrison Wordsworth
grinned through messy ,
suppurating lips, and wrote:

H E L L







Ohhh the sweetling pulsing joy, the coming through the pain, Wordsworth feels the probe slide down the throat, pierce the wrecked anus, puncture the skull...

The plasma ceases to pump through the arteries, the liver no longer secretes bile, the urine dries to salt in the bladder, but the blood washes over us all...

In the night of hell, that glows with its own black light, I remember the burning spasms and freezing pangs that beset me when our lord took me and terribly refashioned me according to his will.

Will it ever, can it ever,
be that good again?

Ripped to shreds and patched together.
I knew then consummately what I was.
What I am. What I always will be...

See me.

L

O

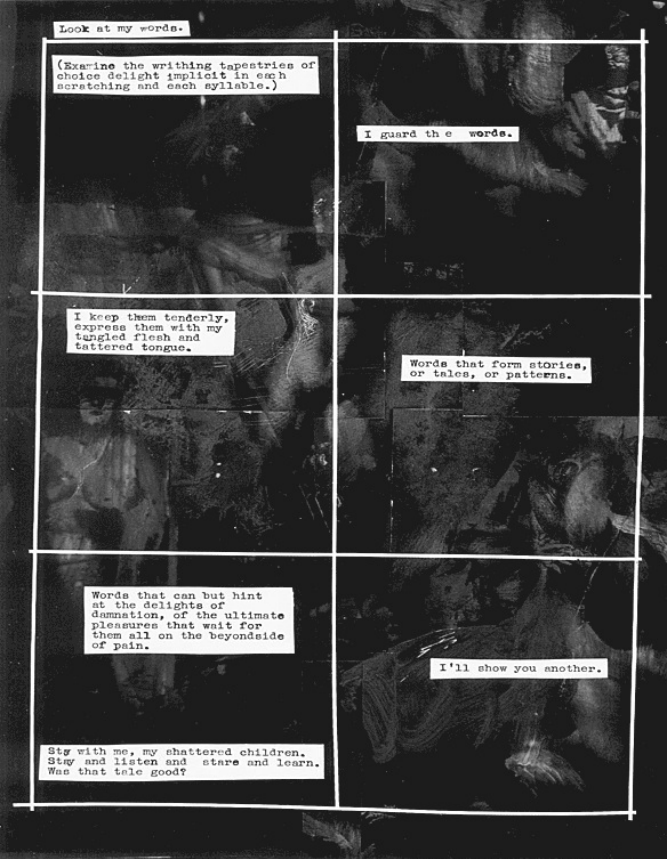
V

E

M

E

LOVE ME



Look at my words.

(Examine the writhing tapestries of
choice delight implicit in each
scratching and each syllable.)

I guard the words.

I keep them tenderly,
express them with my
tangled flesh and
tattered tongue.

Words that form stories,
or tales, or patterns.

Words that can but hint
at the delights of
damnation, of the ultimate
pleasures that wait for
them all on the beyondside
of pain.

I'll show you another.

Stay with me, my shattered children.
Stay and listen and stare and learn.
Was that tale good?



I've got thousands of them.
I hold the stories. I guard
the words.

L o v e m e .



THE GIRL IN THE DEEPHOLLOW

STORY: Del Stone Jr.

ART/LETTERS: Mark Hempel

COLORS: Mark Wheatley

Pain is given
to every
living thing
at birth...

From the
simple
absence
of pleasure
to the
exquisite
agony of
loss...

Sometimes
death is
a release
from pain...

And sometimes
death is only
the beginning...

Love brought Arthur Smack to this place, a seizure of love every bit as crippling as the maladies of flesh and mind that sometimes afflict those people the world hides in places like this.

MERCEDIC
INSTITUTE
OF MENTAL HEALTH

Arthur arrived not as a patient, but just the same, he was seeking help.



MR. SMACK, I BELIEVE YOU'LL FIND THE WORK HERE DEMANDING BUT ULTIMATELY REWARDING.

CLIFTON
EVERETT
ADMINISTRATOR

WE HAVE SO MANY PEOPLE WHO NEED HELP...

YES, SIR.
I'M ANXIOUS...
TO HELP.

The irony of this bend in his life is not lost on Arthur...

Who believes he will find redemption...

...While helping others to travel the same road.



Arthur works tirelessly and efficiently...



And is rewarded by the doctors and other staffers, who give him their trust.

SOMETIMES THESE NUT CASES--SCUSE ME, THESE "PATIENTS"--BECOME A LITTLE OVERHEATED, LIKE BACK THERE. BUT MAN, YOU WERE COOL! YOU CAN CADDY FOR ME ANYTIME!

THANKS, DOCTOR.



But the path to atonement is fraught with peril...

DADDEEE!

HI, MUNCHKIN! HOW'S MY BABY THIS AFTERNOON?

As old illnesses flare anew...



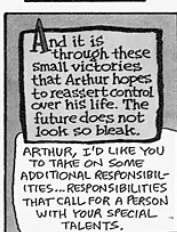
Stubborn fevers that simmer beneath the veneer of his consciousness...

THIS COURT FINDS THE DEFENDANT, ARTHUR SMACK...

And sometimes burn through the armor of his new faith.

...GUILTY OF THE CRIME OF...

It is a war of the soul that Arthur has always fought. Sometimes he is defeated. Sometimes he wins.



And it is through these small victories that Arthur hopes to reassert control over his life. The future does not look so bleak.

ARTHUR, I'D LIKE YOU TO TAKE ON SOME ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES... RESPONSIBILITIES THAT CALL FOR A PERSON WITH YOUR SPECIAL TALENTS.

I THINK YOU'RE UP TO IT.

THESE PATIENTS HAVE CERTAIN, AH, THERAPEUTIC REQUIREMENTS THAT CAN'T BE ADMINISTERED BY THE REGULAR STAFF.

Ward S... Arthur had heard other staff members allude to this place in cryptic, almost sinister tones that reminded him of children telling ghost stories around a campfire...

The patients of Ward S are kept behind lock and key. These are the traumatically insane, the murderers who kill at the behest of voices only they can hear, the cannibals who carve up their victims and store the remains in resealable plastic bags.

AH, NURSE. IF YOU HAVE A MOMENT, I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO MR. ARTHUR SMACK, A NEW ORDERLY WHO WILL BE STAFFING YOUR DEPARTMENT.

Nurse Anole.

WELCOME ABOARD, MR. SMACK. IF YOU HADN'T GUESSED, THIS IS HELL, AND WE DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY IN HELL.

OUR METHODS ARE UNORTHODOX BECAUSE OUR PATIENTS ARE UNORTHODOX.

TAKE MR. MILLER HERE, HE REQUIRES A STRICT REGIMEN OF RITUALIZED PUNISHMENT. HIS PAIN KEEPS HIM ALIVE... SPIRITUALLY.

MR. MILLER IS ONE OF OUR LESS TROUBLESOME GUESTS. WE HAVE FAR WORSE, MR. SMACK. HACKSAW SURGEONS, MESSIAHS WHO DEMAND SACRAMENTS OF BLOOD...

OH, AND THEN WE HAVE RACHEL.

RACHEL STAYS
IN A SPECIAL ROOM...

...WITH A VERY
SPECIAL LOCK.

Rings within rings,
bearing unknown
calligraphies that
simultaneously attract
and repel Arthur.

And wasn't there
another word, a larger
message lurking beneath
the patterns of runes?

I
HAVE
THE
COMBIN-
ATION TO
THIS LOCK,
MR.
SMACK.

I
AM THE
ONLY
PERSON
WHO MAY
OPEN
THIS
DOOR.

YOU SEEM INTRIGUED,
MR. SMACK.

GO AHEAD.
LOOK INSIDE.

YOU MIGHT BE
SURPRISED BY
WHAT YOU SEE.



Rachel...

Arthur's heart
crawls into
his throat.

JUST A GIRL.
SHE'S
JUST A
GIRL!

NOT JUST A GIRL, MR. SMACK.
SHE'S INVENTED CRUELITIES THAT,
BY COMPARISON, LIKEN OUR OTHER
GUESTS TO SAINTS.

SHE'S EARNED HER PLACE ON WARDS.



AND YOU'D BETTER REMEMBER THAT, MR. SMACK.
YOU'VE NEVER MET ANYTHING LIKE RACHEL.



IT WILL BE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO BRING
RACHEL HER MEALS. YOU WILL SLIDE HER
TRAY THROUGH THE SLOT AT THE BOTTOM
OF THE DOOR.



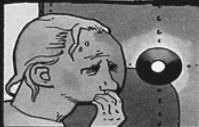
YOU WILL NOT SPEAK TO HER. YOU
WILL NOT TOUCH HER. YOU WILL
HAVE NO CONTACT WITH HER-- NONE
WHATSOEVER. THAT IS MY BURDEN.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

NOW COME WITH
ME, PLEASE. I'LL
SHOW YOU YOUR
OTHER DUTIES.

And so Arthur
falls into
the grim
routine of
ministering
to the
unfortunate
"guests" of
Ward 5.



Arthur is drawn to the
lock at Rachel's cell.
Or is it merely the
lock? A familiar ache,
and a growing despair,
gather at the edges
of his thoughts.



One day, she
speaks to him...

Arthur?
Please?
Can you
hear me?





Arthur? Is it
you, isn't it?

Arthur, you've got to
help me. I know what
nurse Anole probably
told you, but you've got
to believe me: I've
done nothing wrong.



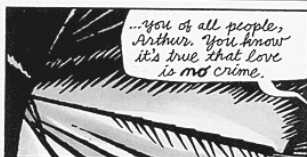
I've been
imprisoned
here, Arthur...



...for the
crime
of love.



And you know
it's true, Arthur...



...you of all people,
Arthur. You know
it's true that love
is ~~no~~ crime.



Will you help
me, Arthur?
Will you? I'll
do anything,
Arthur. Anything.



NO, I CAN'T.
THERE'S
NOTHING
I CAN DO.

Arthur feels
the ugly
constriction
of old
desires...

...Desires he
might have
resisted
again...

...Were it
not for
a touch...

...A touch.
And then...
OH!

The feeling
crawls along
his nerves like
St. Elmo's Fire --it
surges up his spine
to detonate at
the base of his
skull in a concus-
sion of sheer
pleasure...

And that
forbidden
finger
of touch
reaches
into the
part of his
brain where
heaven lies...

Igniting
every sweet dream
he had ever
dreamed.

With Rachel at the
center, brushing
away the dim fragments
of others he had loved...

Until it is only Rachel, nobody and nothing but Rachel, filling every niche and every recess of his need, overwhelming his senses until her presence suddenly becomes cloying and oppressive.

The dream sours to memories Arthur had struggled to bury...

Unhappy memories of his day in court, of the therapy sessions, where the truth was spaded up from the diseased soil of his subconscious...

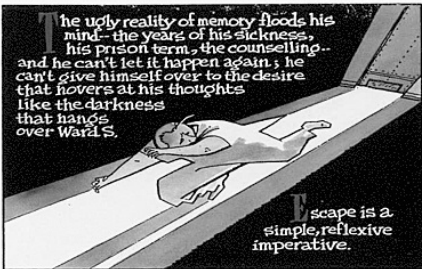
THIS COURT FINDS THE DEFENDANT, ARTHUR SMACK, GUILTY OF THE CRIME OF FELONIOUS SEXUAL BATTERY UPON A MINOR...

...And the meager possibility of hope offered by the doctors...

If only he could resist his impulses, the doctors told him, a new and more virtuous Arthur Smack would be reborn.

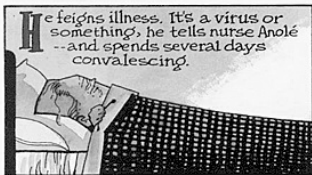


The ugly reality of memory floods his mind—the years of his sickness, his prison term, the counselling... and he can't let it happen again; he can't give himself over to the desire that hovers at his thoughts like the darkness that hangs over Ward 5.



Escape is a simple, reflexive imperative.

He feigns illness. It's a virus or something, he tells nurse Anoleé --and spends several days convalescing.



The days are difficult, but the nights drain him as his thoughts wage war, the cool hand of self-control giving ground to Rachel's fevered presence, her promise of pleasure and the delicious indulgence of lust.



He returns to work and his given light duties until he regains his strength. He is exhausted physically and enervated spiritually. The knowledge that he has resolved nothing eats at him as quietly and persistently as the memory of Rachel's addictive touch. It fills him with despair...



Despair that cannot defeat desire...

I HOPE YOU'RE WELL, ARTHUR, AND READY TO PICK UP WHERE YOU LEFT OFF.



Or the descent into the inevitable...

Turn and leave, Arthur tells himself. Drop the tray and walk away from this place, away from Ward S and the Mercedic Institute and Rachel. Do it, he whispers to himself. Do it now while you still have a shred of self-esteem.



But it is as if the rational part of his mind has become no more than a spectator to his emotions.



Indeed, as he gives himself over to want...



And is touched again by the feel of bliss...



... He almost feels a sense of relief that the war is ended, the conquest complete.

He must have her.

But the lock, the damnable lock! It defeats him.

For days, then weeks, he moves the rings, hoping the lock will yield its secrets. His frustration redoubles his desire.

But the result is always the same: **DEFEAT.** His desire becomes an inhuman thing, a cancer of pain that drives him to continue...

TIC TIC TIC

Until one day, when it seems he has been beaten again and his rage is threatening to swallow him...

A word forms-- a word larger than the runes, larger than the pain that had finally enabled him to see it.

Pain, then, he tells himself as the lock opens. Pain is the key...

click!

yes, Arthur.
Yes. That's the way.

Thank you, Arthur.
Thank you.

Now come to me, Arthur. I have something for you.

The dazzling
brilliance
is swallowed in
a sudden convul-
sion of darkness
that reveals an
abyss--an impos-
sible abyss that
cannot be
resisted.



Ahead, a patch
of light
resolves from
the blackness...



...An opening
of some
kind...
... suffused with
an arterial
glow...



AAAAA!!!

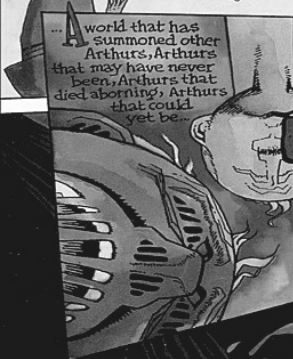


Things within
rings. Words
within words.
Pain within
pain... and a
world within the
world... a world
that has drawn
OTHERS...

OH GOD
OH GOD
OH GOD --
THEY'RE ME--



...to their common
bond of PAIN...



...A world that has
summoned other
Arthurs, Arthurs
that may have never
been, Arthurs that
died aborning, Arthurs
that could yet be...

...and sent plunging
into an ocean...



...A n ocean of
BLOOD...

GAAAH!
KAFF!
KAFF KAFF!!

GLOKKK!

In the distance, riding the crimson froth, Arthur sees someone--SOMETHING--moving toward him.

A boatsman, plying this horrible ocean. As it draws neater, Arthur hears cries of torment...



A monstrosity... What god had he summoned when he cried out?



It is impossible, a horror beyond horrors--and Arthur's mind rebels at the sight, begging him to flee, to escape the thing before he is added to its terrible cargo.

But escape to where?

AND WHERE WILL YOU GO, MR. SMACK? YOU MEAN TO ESCAPE?

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU'RE ANY DIFFERENT THAN MY OTHER GUESTS HERE?

AFTER ALL, THEY ARE YOU.

And then, a thread of hope...



RACHEL

Come to me, Arthur.

Hurry. I know the way out.



THAT'S RIGHT, MR. SMACK! CLIMB! YOU HAVE A PLACE TO GO NOW, SO CLIMB! CLIMB TO WHATEVER AWAITS YOU!



Every molecule of his being convulses with pleasure at her touch...



Her body fits against his more perfectly than mere coincidence would allow...

I want you to love me, Arthur...

The feel of her words, brushing against his throat, is the essence of desire.

He will have her...

Love is the way out, Arthur...

But something is wrong...

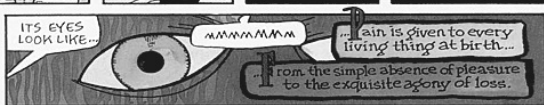
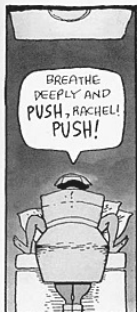
Something is horribly, horribly wrong...



And as his body cries out in horror, the individual cells seeming to writh in their need to escape, Arthur Smack wonders if he has ever known what love, or pain, are truly composed of...



Months later, in a room on Ward S...





STEVIE AND MARTY
FLINNOLI..

STAND UP
COMEDIANS--



--PREPARING FOR
A TOUGH HOUSE.

FINISHING
TOUCHES.



ADD A
LITTLE
COLOR.

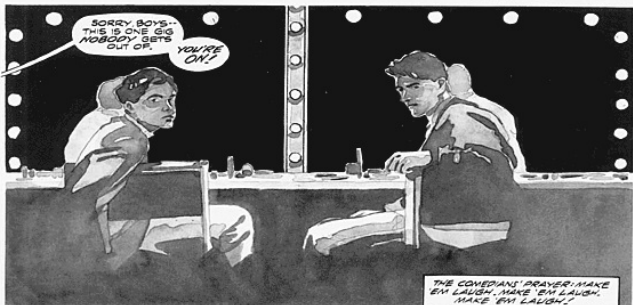
WUNNNNN!
WHAT A DIVE.
WHY'D WE EVER
TAKE THIS
BOOKING?



WE DIDN'T
HAVE A
CHOICE.



I'M NOT
GOING OUT
THERE
AGAIN.



SORRY BOYS--
THIS IS ONE GIG
NOBODY GETS
OUT OF.

YOU'RE
ON!

THE COMEDIANS' PRAYER: MAKE
'EM LAUGH.. MAKE 'EM LAUGH..
MAKE 'EM LAUGH!

WELL...
THAT LAST
COMIC KINGA
FELL APART.

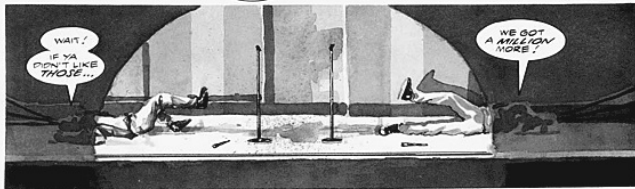
I THINK
YOU'RE GONNA
LIKE THESE NEXT GUYS
HAVING WORKED THEIR
WAY THROUGH A LABY-
RINTH OF COMEDY
CLUBS. THEY FINALLY
FOUND THEIR WAY
HERE!

LEMARCHAND
BRINGS YOU, BACK
AGAIN FOR THE
FIRST TIME...

HEY
BARTENDER...
COUPLE
SHOTS OF
PWS.

IT'S
COMIN'.
IT'S
COMIN'.

THE LAST LAUGH





BUT AMONG THE LEGIONS OF HELL, ALL IS NOT AS IT SEEMS.

A NEW AGE HAS DAWNED. AS A DARING GROUP OF COMMANDOS CHALLENGE THE WRATH OF HELL TO SAVE INNOCENTS TRAPPED THERE.

RON RINGWOOD, MOST REBELLIOUS OF THE SEVEN HARROWERS, REMOVES HIS CENOBIOTE DISGUISE.

SOUL SAVING TIME!





HMM.
THREE
AGAINST
3000.

AN INSTANT OPENING, CUT
BY A HARROWER'S
WEAPON--MAKES A GRAND
EXIT FROM THE THEATRE...
AND HELL.



WE KNOW
WHERE
WE'RE NOT
WANTED.



HE'S
NOT A
CENOSITE!

HE'S ONE
OF THE
HARROWERS!

ALWAYS
LEAVE 'EM
WANTING
MORE
BOYS.

STOP
HIM!



THEY'RE
GONE. NO
TRACE.

SUCH A
DISRUPTION.

LEVIATHAN
WILL NOT
STAND FOR
THIS.



NOT HELL...

...NOT EARTH...

...ANOTHER
PLACE.

THE GODDESS'S
FORCE DRAWS
THEM IN.

WELCOME,
FINNOLIS. I
AM MORTE MAMME
AND I HAVE A
PROPOSITION
FOR YOU.

IF YOU SO
CHOOSE, I CAN
SEVER YOUR TIES
TO HELL AND RETURN
YOU TO EARTH FOR
ONE FULL DAY AS
YOUR FORMER
SELVES.

AS THE SUN
SETS, YOU WILL
BE TRANSFORMED
ANEW INTO THAT
WHICH BEFITS THE
NATURE AND
SOPHISTICATION
OF YOUR SPIRITS.

OR RON
RINGWOOD
CAN RETURN
YOU TO
HELL.

THE CHOICE
IS SIMPLE.

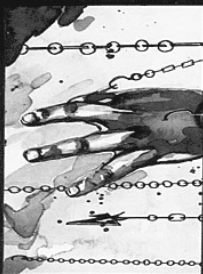
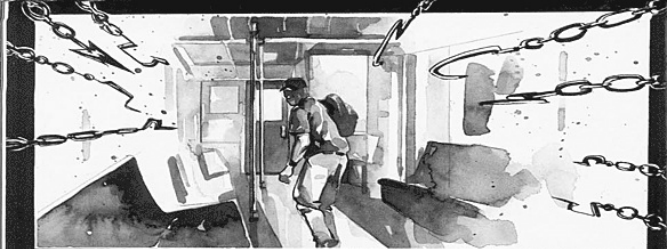
AND IT HAPPENS
"IN THE BLINK
OF AN EYE..."



WE GOT TIME--LET'S DO IT.









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Puzzles, puzzles everywhere—Solve them and win a one-way trip to Hell...

If crosswords are your game, we have one where the solutions lie deep within your very soul.

If you think you have the coordination, figure out the door that imprisons one of Hell's smallest emissaries.

And if you find Hell's not all you'd hoped, perhaps one of Morte Mammè's cadre—Ron Ringwood—can bring you home again.

No matter what happens, though, you're in for one Hell of a time...



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